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ABSTRACT

"The Reality Game" is intended to provide players with an opportunity to experience the harsh lifestyle of a migrant family in their daily struggle for survival. By shedding light on many variables impeding the education of migrant children, the players should be able to infer implications for their academic and personal growth. The gameboard includes a die, three sets of fortune cards, three sets of disaster cards, marking pen, and response sheet. Length of the game is a total of 18 rolls of the die in 3 different phases. Phase 1 fortunes or disasters describe events from the time migrants leave their home in Eagle Pass, Texas, and arrive in Eaton, Colorado. Phase 2 fortunes or disasters are those migrants may encounter upon arrival. Phase 3 fortunes or disasters are those migrants may encounter during their stay within a particular area. This paper provides a brief overview of the migrant's lifestyle, the rules of the game, copy of the response card, a sample of a family composition, and a listing of the disasters and fortunes for each phase. (NQA)

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THE REALITY GAME

BACKGROUND

The rising price of gas and runaway inflation threatens the average American's standard of living. But, stop for a second and consider what the plight of a shadowy American population - the migrant farmworker - must be like. In retrospection, we've had it pretty "cushy" and continue to keep our heads above water. We enjoy a relatively high standard of living. By contrast, the farmworker is by definition a poor person. The massive problems confronting migrants cannot be properly examined without understanding the poverty affecting them. The alarming statistics relating to education, health. and housing are the tip of the iceberg. Underneath lies an ugly system of poverty and social exploitation hidden from general view.

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Problems are inextricably interwoven into the migrants' poverty. Poor health, for example, is related to low income, since medical services are costly. In turn, when a migrant is sick and does not work, no pay is forthcoming. In relation to migrant children, poor health often is the cause of their lack of achievement in school. When they are sick (or have no shoes to wear), they do not attend school.

Most often, migrant children do not attend school because they have to work in order to contribute to family earnings. They may harvest the crops or care for younger children. Due to absenteeism, the children's success in school is minimal. This lack of success leads to negative feedback and loss of interest in academic achievement.

The low income from sporadic and poorly paid labor forces migrant families into inadequate housing. They pay for and receive unsatisfactory health care and lack proper nutrition. The migrant worker, then. from childhood is locked into a position that limits earning power. Such migrants, for the remainder of their lives, seem able to do nothing else but migrate and work, work and migrate.

Reference:

U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. People Who Follow the Crops. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1978.

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THE REALITY GAME

PURPOSE: To provide players with the opportunity to experience the harsh lifestyle of a migrant family in their daily struggle for survival. We hope that by shedding light on many variables impeding the education of migrant children, you'll be able to infer implications for their academic and personal growth.

MATERIALS: The Reality Game gameboard which includes the following:

- die
- 3 sets of fortune cards
- 3 sets of disaster cards
- marking pen
- response sheet

RULES OF THE GAME:

1. The group should decide on a "family name" which can be written on the space provided on the gameboard. Members should be listed by name and "position" (father, mother, grandmother, aunt, uncle, etc.) for adults. (One person is to be appointed recorder and will record the family feelings reactions toward the situation being read.) Children should be listed by name and age.

2. To determine whether the turn is a fortune or disaster, roll the die. An even number (2,4,6) is a fortune, an odd number (1,3,5) is a disaster.

3. Length of game is a total of eighteen (18) rolls of the die in three (3) different phases. Express your feelings in response to the situation just read.

4. The family will pick a card describing a fortune or disaster with each roll of the die. Phase I (red cards) fortunes or disasters describe events from the time you leave your home in Eagle Pass, Texas, and arrive in Eaton, Colorado. Phase II (blue cards) fortunes or disasters are those you may encounter upon arrival. Phase III (green cards) fortunes or disasters are those you may encounter during your stay within a particular area.

5. The father (or designated person) of each family will read aloud the fortune or disaster to the family members at which time they will immediately respond to the situation. Possible solutions to disasters should be discussed by the entire group. The "recorder" for the group will write down responses and/or solutions on the response cards.

6. At the end of eighteen (18) rolls, the game is finished. All groups come together and discuss the migrant farmworker's lifestyle and implications for education of migrant children.

RESPONSE CARD FOR THE REALITY GAME

PHASE (circle): 1 2 3 FAMILY NAME: _____

DIRECTIONS: After each roll, circle on this response card whether you rolled a fortune or disaster. Summarize the comments from the group in the space provided.

ROLL #1: Fortune/Disaster

ROLL #2: Fortune/Disaster

ROLL #3: Fortune/Disaster

ROLL #4: Fortune/Disaster

ROLL #5: Fortune/Disaster

ROLL #6: Fortune/Disaster

COMMENTS:

REALITY GAME

FAMILY COMPOSITION

FATHER

MOTHER

SIBLING (MINIMUM AGE: 5)

SIBLING

SIBLING

SIBLING

OPTIONAL CHARACTERS

AUNT

GRANDMOTHER

GRANDFATHER

UNCLE

DAUGHTER (AGE____)

SON (AGE____)

COUSIN

REALITY GAME CARDS

Phase 1

Disaster:

1. When requesting financial assistance from a local parish along the route, they're refused because they're not established parishioners.
2. Family denied access to bathroom facilities at gas station.
3. To avoid harassment, family follows their elders' set route (not super highway) and arrive late.
4 Late snowfall causes ground blizzard in southeast Colorado.
5 Child accidentally sits on cactus.
6 State trooper pulls you over for "Immigration Check."
7 Children fighting in back throw out their shoes and don't tell you.
8 Child misreads map. Adds $50.00 to gas bill.
9 Child takes ill. $25.00 for medicine, $35.00 for doctor fees.
10 State trooper chases you from rest and overnight camping area. $15.00 fine.
11 Trying to cut corners, you buy cheap gas.
12 Battery dies. Replace at a cost of $65.00.
13 You have a blow-out. $50.00 replacement.
14 Engine stalls, repairs cost $45.00.
15 Speeding ticket. Must pay $25.00 before leaving town.
16 Family buys bad bologna; not aware of expiration date.
17 Service station rips you off for new shocks.
18 Water jug leaks. Wets bedding.

Fortune:

1 Cool weather during the trip; children not suffering heat discomfort and behave.
2 Abuelita gave $25.00 to help pay expenses on the road.
3 Money savings at a gas station involved in a "gas war."
4 No major highway construction along the way.
5 You win $45.00 at Bingo night.
6 Children fit comfortably and you can carry more personal belongings.
7 You find two sleeping bags alongside road.
8 Locate Spanish-speaking radio station.
9 Older child has learned to read maps.
10 Get use of campground facilities at no cost.
11 Help with extra farm work. Work season extended one week.
12 Father gets ride back from town after getting fan belt.
13 Good weather. Family ahead of schedule for arrival.
14 Family able to buy new tires for the automobile.
15 Mother and fourteen year old male are able to share driving.

Phase 2

Disaster:

1 Child of 13 wants to go to school. You need him to work in the fields.

2 Only housing available is farmer's 8 X 24 trailer which family takes.

3 Family unaware that medical care by appointment is cheaper than emergency service at hospital.

4 Children not acclimated to cool weather. Without proper clothing, colds are chronic.

5 Parents list fewer children than permissible on rental application. Consequently, they're evicted losing a $300.00 deposit.

6 Farmer leaves cured seeds and pesticide containers near house.

7 The only laundromat you feel comfortable at went out of business.

8 At the park, juveniles drive by yelling obscenities and telling you to "go home."

9 You find out farmer has bought mechanized equipment for crops.

10 No summer school available.

11 Upon arrival, father suffers heart attack and dies. Family has no money.

12 A continued rain in spring delayed planting of crops.

13 Summer school session won't begin for another week.

14 House has no indoor plumbing nor screens.

15 Farmers only plant half as many beets this year.

16 Children get scabies from poor sanitary conditions/housing.

17 Immigration "sweep" occurs first night of arrival. Older son deported.

18 Local shop keepers inflate prices when migrants arrive and maintain high prices throughout the season.

19 No housing available. Stay in truck at the park.

20 Family evicted due to housing renovation mandated by authorities and, consequently, lose one month's work.

21 Children born in U.S. kept out of school for fear of discovery that older children aren't citizens.

Fortune:

1 Unlike neighboring state, new state enrolls children in school despite lack of birth certificates.

2 Younger child with kidney problem gets medical care thanks to recruiter's efforts.

3 Good weather awaits you. Plan to begin working right away.

4 Housing has been improved--screens on doors and windows.

5 Summer school opens early. Send children to school.

6 At the grocery store you read that the Migrant health Clinic will be open every night.

7 Social Services will offer supplementary food assistance this summer for farmworkers.

8 The majority of school staff is bilingual this year.

9 Day care services offered this year.

10 Night program includes ESL for adults.

11 Restaurant/Lounge owner is LULAC member and sponsors dances.

12 Post Office has bilingual clerks.

13 Farmer gives family $100.00 plus 7% interest he's owed family from previous summer.

14 House has been freshly painted; with beds.

15 Migrant program family contact arrives and registers your children for school.

16 Farmer agrees to have "Port-O-Sans" place near fields.

17 Community offers Mexican movies at the drive-in.

18 Farmer agrees to use long-handled hoes instead of short-handled.

Phase 3

Disaster:

1 Father arrives at work intoxicated and gets fired.

2 Your children's teachers don't speak Spanish, but your children do.

3 Family gets sprayed by aerial company with pesticide. Must stay home for a week.

4 Hail wipes out crops.

5 Farmer doesn't pay you the promised amount. During the argument he threatens to turn your family into the Immigration Service.

6 Eldest child drops out of school. She/he later shoots self. Family has to get money to get body to Texas.

7 Family paying $300.00 monthly rent. Heating system faulty and family fearing deportation won't complain.

8 Immigration "sweep" picks up parents in fields. Children at school.

9 School sends you home a note in English about parent/teacher conferences. You can't read it.

10 Because of financial condition, mother forced to return to work 2 days after delivery.

11 Children don't like the food at school. Only eating at home.

12 One of your children is examined at school and needs eye glasses.

13 Home-base school locked up child's hearing aide for fear of loss.

14 Unsupervised children playing with matches while parents at work and burn down shed.

15 Child mistakenly arrested while at park.

16 School facilities overcrowded and no materials available.

17 Cousin involved in accident with your truck. Other driver at fault and has no insurance.

Phase 3

Fortune:

1 Parent night presentation alerts you to pesticide dangers in the fields.

2 Oldest child has been accepted into the university.

3 Children involved at school with RIF and clothing distribution.

4 Grower contracts very good this year. Plenty of work in the area to go around.

5 Wage and claim division agrees to support farmworker disputes this summer.

6 Farmer defends you against a false accusation in court.

7 An unexpected increase in wages comes at the second cleaning.

8 Your child has been diagnosed as exceptionally gifted.

9 Nurse at Health Clinic speaks Spanish and also makes visits to homes.

10 Farmer trains father and oldest son to run equipment.

11 Teachers very innovative. Children learning more English.

12 Father offered job with construction firm.

13 Head cook at summer school is of same cultural heritage.

14 Hailstorm knocks out windshield on truck. Farmer gets insurance agent to contact you immediately. Quick settlement.

15 Low Income Energy Assistance Program available. Family qualifies.

16 In spite of discouragement from father, oldest child returns to Colorado and enrolls at the university.

17 Food franchise offers children a party. Local tutor ties in toy drive for kids.

18 Older children get opportunity to attend night classes.